

HER PORTRAIT.

The night was warm, and the porch was wide,
And the soft wind wafted the music's tune,
And a youth and a maid sat side by side
Neath the witching light of the summer moon.

Said the youth: "There's a maiden I dearly love,
She's as fair as the daybreak and pure as gold,
With a voice as soft as a cooing dove,
And a mouth like a bud with one leaf unrolled.
The gleam of her eyes makes the starlight pale,
And she's witty and clever, well read and bred."

The maid's cheeks flushed at this glowing tale,
And—"I love you, too," she said.
—Beatrice Hanscom in Ladies' Home Journal.

CYRANO COURTSHIP.

[The following story is based on the celebrated play, "Cyrano de Bergerac," in which Mr. Richard Mansfield, the actor, has been recently creating a sensation in New York. In the play Cyrano, a man of brilliant intellect, but handicapped by an enormous nose, woos his cousin Roxane, through a handsome fool, keeping himself out of her sight.]

Phyllis began to laugh just as soon as Cyrano made his appearance. This conduct on her part was as distinctly disappointing as though I hadn't fully expected her to act in such a manner. To tell the truth, I really didn't want to take Phyllis to see "Cyrano" at all, because—well, you see, I've a pretty big nose myself. It isn't a Cyrano member by any means, of course, but even as a child the women who didn't like my mother used to pity me openly on account of it, and my college friends still allude to my unfortunate proboscis as a "regular wind splitter." So, as I said, I wasn't at all anxious to see "Cyrano" in Phyllis' company, and if I hadn't feared her suspecting the reason of my unwillingness in this regard I should never have done so. As it was it really hurt me a little when her dimples began to come and go at sight of Mansfield's colossal nasal organ. I said nothing, however, and it was not until the end of the "poet's bakery" act that I received my first cruel blow.

"I think Mansfield is perfectly sublime, don't you?" gushed a pretty girl of Phyllis' acquaintance who sat in front of us. It was with difficulty that Phyllis restrained the dimples from open insurrection as she replied.

"Well, they say it is only a little step from the sublime to the ridiculous," she remarked with dancing eyes, "and as I never in all my life saw anything half so ridiculous as that nose I suppose its wearer is at least approaching sublimity."

"Phyllis," said I when the music had given me half a chance to speak without the girl in front hearing all I said, "don't you think it's possible for the owner of a big nose to be anything but ridiculous?"

Phyllis cast a mischievous glance at me over her shoulder and before making answer buried her face in the big bunch of violets I had given her.

"All things are possible," she then rather cruelly said, "but I should think it would be rather difficult for the owner of a big nose to be anything else."

The kiss scene was beginning now, so I had a long act in which to recover so much of my equanimity as I might. When Roxane had delivered her passionate exhortation to Cyrano to protect her lover from all the danger which might threaten him at Arras, beginning with sword wounds and ending with cold, and when she begged her cousin to see that the wordless object of her devotion wrote to her frequently, Phyllis turned to me as the curtain fell, and I could see there were tears in her eyes. She acted as though she would have said something, but did not. For once I was wise enough to hold my tongue and to leave all chance of assistance for my cause to fate or providence—and the girl in front of us. This girl had been crying openly, and her eyes were all red and moist still as she squirmed about in her seat in order to face Phyllis.

"Oh, Phyllis! Isn't it a pity such a perfectly grand character should have such an awful nose!" she exclaimed weepingly. Phyllis regarded her with an air of chilly contempt.

"What under the ever blessed canopy does the kind of nose he has matter?" she inquired loftily. "With a character like Cyrano's features don't matter in the least. Who with any soul at all would dream of considering or even remembering his nose?"

The girl in front of us was properly squelched, and I was unwisely elated. "Who, indeed?" I murmured acquiescently. Phyllis stiffened immediately.

"I wasn't talking to you, thank you," she remarked in a tone softly suggestive of icebergs and the Klondike and so on. I was so crushed by and indignant at her manner and speech that I didn't even come to her rescue when she lost her handkerchief during the course of the fourth act and was in dire distress for another wherewith to wipe away the tears consequent upon Roxane's sorrow over her lover's death and Cyrano's wounding. And she in turn was strangely silent when we rose at the conclusion of the last act and made our way toward the street.

The crowd was great and we were obliged to stand a few moments in the foyer. Phyllis turned to me suddenly with an apologetic touch upon my arm. "I didn't mean what I said about—about big noses," she said softly, and picking shyly at my coat sleeve as she spoke—"that is—not about all big noses. Cyrano"—recovering herself somewhat as the onward movement of the crowd recalled her to conventional-ity and the recollection of where we were—"Cyrano was perfectly lovely in spite of his nose. He was so sweet and faithful to his love," she finished more naturally as we came opposite a fine portrait of Mansfield which hung on the wall near by. Her wraps were still on

my arm, and I drew her aside gently to don them.

"Phyllis," I said softly as she slipped into her jacket and I dropped the fur collar into its enviable place about her throat. "Phyllis, do you think Cyrano was the only man in the world who was ever faithful to his love in spite of a big nose?"

She looked up, she looked down, she blushed vividly, but I held her firmly facing me—under guise of buttoning her coat—and she was compelled to make some sort of reply. After a moment it came, and unexpectedly gentle, considering all things.

"No," she said sweetly, "I don't. I suppose there are men living even now—a few of them anyway—who are faithful like that."

My heart gave a great bound of joy, for I had been longing to ask Phyllis a certain question for many months, and Phyllis was not always kind. I augured well for my question from her late remark, but, mindful of the lesson of the earlier evening, I was careful to allow nothing of my elation to be seen.

"Phyllis," I asked again, holding both her hands in mine under pretense of giving her her muff, "Phyllis, do you think I'm one of those men?"

"I—I—don't know; perhaps," said Phyllis, blushing gloriously, but she pulled her hands away from mine in a hurry and set her face toward the street.

I was at a loss how to continue the interesting series of questions which might never be so sympathetically and conveniently propounded and responded to again, and again Fate or Providence, in the form of the girl who sat immediately in front of us, came to my aid.

"Oh, Phyllis!" she cried, evidently forgetting all about the snub administered by that charming damsel in discussing Cyrano's "awful" nose. "oh, Phyllis, won't you decide the question Mr. Barton and I have been disputing? Do you think it would have been easy for Roxane to love Cyrano in spite of his nose if she hadn't imagined herself in love with the other man, or would that fearful member have rendered any girl's love impossible?"

Phyllis sniffed audibly.

"Well, according to my opinion, my way of thinking," she announced with decision, "the girl who would stop to think of the shape of a man's nose after he had proved himself at all worthy of her would be too small and little, in point of soul and heart, to be worth any man's love. It doesn't seem to me such a little thing as a nose—even if it's as big as Cyrano's."

"seeing that the other girl and her escort suspected a pun and were preparing to smile, I ought to be allowed to enter into the consideration of such a question at all. I don't see just how it could, for that matter. For my part, after the first shock of getting used to it was over, of course," this with a hasty, half furtive glance in my direction. "I don't see how it could have anything to do with the question of love at all."

"Well, I don't believe I could bring myself to love a man with a nose like Cyrano's," persisted the other girl, whose escort, soon to assume a nearer relationship, if common report was to be believed, boasted a nose modeled something after the snub pattern, and once more Phyllis sniffed.

"I could," her attitude seemed to say as her friend kept on chattering and laughing, and I took advantage of the moment to slip my hand over hers, as it hung at her side, the soft folds of her pretty dress in its grasp. Phyllis' own nose is a dainty little feature, but it was elevated in a manner more decided than graceful just then—another fact from which I augured well. Nor did she snatch her hand away, as I had half expected her to do.

"Phyllis," I murmured again as we reached the street and stood waiting for the carriage, "do you think you could love a man in spite of his big nose, if he happened to have one?"

Phyllis looked a trifle scared, but the good blood which made her soldier ancestors famous for their deeds of valor made her brave and a trifle daring, so she glanced up courageously to meet my eyes.

"I—I think so," she whispered back, trembling a little, but not shrinking from my eager face in the least, and once more I was emboldened to further risk of my fate.

"Phyllis," I said, whispering myself now, "do you think you could love me?"

There was a moment's silence between us, and then I was helping Phyllis into the carriage. But she had timidly murmured "Yes" in the interval, and that is the reason I am now firm in my belief that Mansfield, concerning whose histrionic genius I had been carelessly doubtful heretofore, is the greatest actor America has ever seen or will see for many a day to come, and in this opinion Phyllis, who presented me with a framed photograph of Cyrano and who has not fewer than seven other photographs of the man who made him famous stuck about the walls of her own sitting room, most heartily concurs.—Chicago Post.

An Unlucky Postman.

A postman belonging to the imperial postoffice at Nanking was suddenly and summarily arrested the other day by one of the high mandarins in that city and thrown into the district magistrate's yamen to be bamboozled and caged. Upon inquiry by the postal authorities as to the reason of such arbitrary conduct it appeared that this postman had been guilty of having delivered to his accuser's yamen in the course of his rounds an anonymous letter which contained whole pages of cutting sarcasms accusing the receiver of the letter of avarice, extortion, etc. The irate mandarin made the unlucky postman responsible for the obnoxious letter, saying that he had no right to deliver such matter to his yamen. The commissioner of customs of Wuhu, who had been notified of the affair, extricated the postman out of his difficulties.—North China News.

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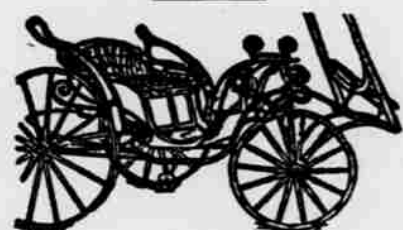
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